The Member, continuing, said that the officers concerned in fixing *porambokes* took away any portion of the registered holding, leaving the ryots to litigate about it. The amount of fines inflicted under sections 6 and 7 was abnormal and the method of eviction under section 9 was unhappy.

Taking all the above difficulties into consideration, the policy of the Government should, the Member contended, be as far as possible to safeguard the interests of the ryots to the utmost. He also pleaded for sympathy and moderation in the infliction of fines and for the suspension of the penal clauses of the Regulation till the next Survey, which should be effected as early as practicable, at least in the seven northernmost taluks.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

(2) Forest Revenue.

15. Forest administration in Travancore.

Mr. P. S. Maruthanayagom Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Padmanabhapuram) said that the defects in the forest administration had been again and again placed before the Government at successive sessions of the Assembly, that no good results had followed in consequence, and that, though prior to 1054 there was no scientific exploitation of the forests, the condition of the forests was much better then.

It was for the systematic and scientific management and working of the forests that Mr. Bourdillon was pressing upon the attention of the Government from 1070 the necessity of preparing Working Plans for all the Reserves. As a result of that, 12 years hence, the Working Plan for the Shendurni Working Circle was sanctioned by the Government in 1082. The reports for the Yerur, Kulathurpuzha and Arienkavu Working Circles were sanctioned by the Government only towards the close of 1091, though it was stated, in the Administration Report for 1084, that the Working Plan Reports in respect of the above Reserves were almost completed in 1083. The working of the Sandalwood tracts in the Anjanad Valley was also stated to be in accordance with the Working plan. The delay in the submission of the Working Plan Reports for the three Reserves mentioned above was inordinate. Though the Report for 1087 made mention of an Assistant Conservator as having been entrusted with the preparation of the Working Plan for the Malayattur Reserve, nothing further was known about it. It was stated, in the report for 1084, that a Ranger was appointed to report on the conditions of the Forests in the Southern Division and that, at the close of 1084, the report was under the consideration of the Government. Though the Report for 1088 showed that the above report was sent back to the Assistant Conservator with certain remarks by the Conservator, the report had not been submitted to the Government yet.

Scientific exploitation of timber was not being carried on, to the injury of the forests. Mr. Bourdillon was of opinion that over-extraction of timber was injurious to the forests in the long run, as, by doing so, the forests would be devoid of tree growth within a few years. Over extraction of timber was being carried on now, though, for some time past, the department had not followed that policy. The revenue under abandoned and inferior timber also considerably went up in recent years. That did not show a healthy sign. The increase under that head would be detrimental to the interests of the forests. The work of sowing and planting was not regularly carried out; and the work carried out from 1081—1089 was not commensurate with the amounts spent.

Regarding the forest revenue, the Member said that the increase in revenue was due to the increased exploitation of timber and that, if in any year a less quantity of timber was exploited, the revenue for that year showed a substantial fall. Another reason of the increased revenue was due to the abnormal raising of the tariff rates for the different species of timber. The tariff rates were steadily increased from 1082, with the result that the people of the country found it extremely difficult to get timber. The people did not get timber at the tariff rates.

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Dewan.—Government have ordered the daily sales of timber to the public at tariff rates in all the depots.

Member.—That is, no doubt, the rule; but the rule is seldom carried out in practice. In the Thuckalai depôt, there is practically no timber.

Dewan.—If the Member would mention any depots where timber is not sold at tariff rates, the conduct of the officers responsible would be seriously noticed.

The Member, continuing, said that, to show increased revenue, the department often disposed of the entire stock of timber in individual depots in one lot at rates much below the tariff to foreign capitalists, that better revenue could have been realised by selling the timber in auction in small lots, and that, by the latter arrangement, both the people and the Government would alike be benefited. To obviate the above difficulties, the Member suggested that the tariff rates be reduced and he added that the reduction of the tariff rates would not entail any loss upon the Government in the long run. He also advocated that the export duty on timber should be revived.

The revenue under "minor forest produce" had not been sufficiently developed. Many varieties of paints, oils, varnish, etc., could be successfully made here. It was necessary to pay greater attention to the above item.

Regarding free passes for the removal of timber, etc., from registered lands, the Member said that there was great delay in the issue of such passes and prayed that the production of the sketch and Proverthicar's certificate required by the rules might be dispensed with. The Watch Stations in the interior, if necessary, might be located in the outskirts of Reserves.

Great difficulty was experienced in getting the *kudivila* on Royal trees removed by the department from private holdings. The Member quoted an instance in which no *kudivila* was paid even for 4 years after the removal of the trees. He, therefore, prayed that previous notice might be given to the owners in regard to the removal of Royal trees from their compounds and that the owners be paid the *kudivila* due to them on the spot before the trees were removed from their compounds. Sufficient facilities were not afforded for the removal of green manure from the forests.

The next point of the Member was that the students proposed by the Conservator to be sent to Coimbatore during the current year for training were not natives of Travancore. It was highly desirable and necessary that the subjects of the State should be selected for training in the said College at the expense of Government.

Mr. Thariathu Kunji Thommen (Member, Muvattupuzha taluk) began by saying that the provisions of sanctioned Working Plans were not being properly carried out, that reckless removals of timber were being effected in the Shendurni Working Circle and that two Working Plan Reports were still pending with the Conservator.

Dewan.—I would draw the Member's attention to the fact that the points touched upon by him so far have all been dealt with at length by the previous speaker. Agreeably to the request made in this Assembly last year by one of the Members, the Government have this year published the Memoranda of subjects in the Gazette about two weeks prior to the date of the Assembly. It would be an advantage, as stated by me last year, if the Members will talk among themselves previously and come to some understanding as to the particular aspects of questions, of which notice has been given by more than one Member, which each Member should confine his attention to. If the Members will, in some such way, divide the work among them, it would enable them to devote more attention and time to the points taken up by them and also to deal with the questions with greater effect.

The Member proceeded and said that there was no timber available in some of the depôts for sale, that the wholesale disposal of timber depôt by depôt at the end of a year was disadvantageous to the people and that the sale of timber every month in easy lots would prove more profitable.

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Dewan.—Monthly auction sales *are* even now carried on in the depôts. The notices are previously published in the Gazette.

The Member said that there was no timber available for building purposes in some of the depôts and that timber from private holdings could also not be availed of owing to the difficulty in getting free passes for their removal. He suggested that Rangers be authorised to issue free passes for the removal of fuel, &c.

Dewan.—The question whether the power of granting free passes could be safely delegated to the Range Officers is already under consideration.

The Member next urged the necessity of opening a timber depôt near Muvattupuzha, as the people could not easily get timber from the depôts situated at great distances.

He then pointed out that there were many swampy areas within the Reserves admirably suited for cultivation, that, on personal inspection of the localities, the Conservator would be convinced of the desirability of registering them, that a Committee consisting of the Survey Superintendent, Revenue officers, and the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries be asked to report on the suitability of such areas for cultivation and that the Government might pass orders on the advice of the Committee.

In the Muvattupuzha taluk, several wet lands lay adjoining the reserved forests. The forests extended up to the bunds of the paddy lands. The boundaries of reserves should be moved back by at least 2 chains from the bunds of cultivable wet lands. At present, respectable people were punished for alleged trespass into the reserves on the mere testimony of Forest guards. The evil should be removed.

Dewan.—What, do you say, should be done to avert the evil? Will it be possible in all such cases to find witnesses other than the Guards who detect the offence?

The Member submitted that Foresters and Guards should be frequently transferred and that the Guards posted to places near the hills in the interior should be educated and honest men. On the other hand, Rangers and Divisional Officers should not be transferred frequently.

Lastly, the Member suggested that the owners of private holdings should be given full rights over the Royal trees growing in their registered lands. In other words, the Royalty on such trees should be abolished. According to the present rules, half the value had to be paid to the Government. Under the existing arrangements, there was no incentive to the owners to foster the growth of such trees in their compounds.

The next complaint of the Member was about the delay in the settlement of claims for *kudivila*. Several suits had been filed against the Government. He suggested that, instead of half the net value of the trees, arrangements might be made to hand over to owners half the number of trees felled from their compounds, on the spot, together with a pass permitting their transport.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

The Assembly adjourned at 5-5 P. M.

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